ASBESTOS IN SCHOOLS NEWS

Volume 1, Number 1 May, 2001
Lead & Asbestos Hazard Prevention Program (207)287-2651

WHY THIS NEWSLETTER?

Recently several school systems in Maine have unexpectedly found themselves responsible for costly asbestos incidents. By periodically publishing this newsletter highlighting common asbestos issues in schools, the DEP Lead & Asbestos Hazard Prevention Program (LAHPP) hopes to help school personnel focus on preventing and correcting asbestos problems before they become hazards.

If you have any questions on any of the information in this newsletter or suggestions for topics for future newsletters, please call us at 1-800-452-1942 or check out our website at www.MaineDEP.com

SAMPLING FOR ASBESTOS

There are three basic ways to test for asbestos in schools. When deciding whether you need to sample for asbestos and which method(s) to use, the most important consideration is the purpose behind the sampling.

Bulk sampling is performed to determine whether a material contains asbestos fibers. If a building material has greater than 1% asbestos by weight it is considered an "asbestos-containing material" and must be managed in accordance with AHERA regulations. Bulk sampling is required during the initial inspection for asbestos in a school, and prior to renovation and demolition activities.

Air sampling is performed to determine if there are asbestos fibers in the air. According to the law, air sampling must always be performed at the end

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IMPACT SURVEYS ARE REQUIRED BEFORE ANY DEMOLITION OR RENOVATION

If you have any renovations planned in your school, you must have a "Renovation Impact Survey" done as part of your planning and budgeting process. This survey will carefully evaluate whether there is any asbestos-containing material (ACM) that may be impacted during the planned renovation.

Building systems that may contain asbestos include heating and ventilation systems, floors, walls, ceilings and roofs. You need to do a renovation impact survey even if the original asbestos survey in your management plan does not identify ACM in the area of the renovation. Some ACM materials may have been missed when the original asbestos survey was done for a school because those surveys only identified visible ACM (i.e., the surveys don't look in chases, behind walls, etc.), did not look at

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PASS IT ON...

Please share these copies of the *Asbestos in Schools News* with other school personnel. We keep our costs and mailing list manageable by sending ten copies to the Superintendent or Headmaster of the Local Education Agency (LEA) to distribute to the asbestos designated persons, principals, and head custodial staff for each school. If you are the superintendent or headmaster, please make sure the newsletters reach the other school personnel. If you need more copies, please call the DEP Asbestos Program at (207)287-2651.

...and KEEP A COPY FOR REFERENCE. You may wish to keep this copy with your AHERA "Asbestos Management Plan". You may find this information helpful if asbestos issues arise in the future.

ALWAYS HAVE A RENOVATION IMPACT SURVEY DONE BY AN ASBESTOS CONSULTANT AS PART OF YOUR PROJECT DESIGN

Testing for Asbestos *(Continued from page 1)*

of an asbestos abatement project (removal, repair, or clean up operation). You may also want to have air sampling performed outside the regulated area during active asbestos abatement to be sure no asbestos fibers escape outside the work area.

Dust sampling for asbestos is not required by any state or federal regulation. This is because asbestos is an airborne hazard; i.e., asbestos in dust does not pose a hazard unless it becomes airborne. A school may choose to use dust sampling to supplement the required visual evaluation following an asbestos fiber release episode. Although there are no EPA-approved dust sampling methodologies, swipe, tape and micro-vac techniques are generally used.

All asbestos samples must be collected by a DEP-licensed consultant, and must be analyzed by a DEP-licensed laboratory using approved analytical methods.

There are also different laboratory methods that can be used when analyzing samples for asbestos. Again, you must consider the purpose of your sampling when selecting the appropriate methodology. If you know why you're sampling and the information you need to gain from the sampling, you can select the appropriate type of sample(s) and the best analytical method to meet your needs.

If you think you may have an asbestos or indoor air quality problem in your school, call the Division of Safety and Environmental Services (DSES) at 624-7360. DSES offers free technical assistance and can do a site visit to help you include the cost of appropriate sampling and mitigation work in your Revolving Renovation Fund application.

Impact Surveys… *(Continued from page 1)*

roofing materials, and the general level of knowledge of asbestos in building materials has increased over the past 12 years.

This renovation impact survey should be done as part of any renovation planning project. If it is budgeted and performed as part of your renovation project, then the costs are eligible for reimbursement from the State's Revolving Renovation Fund if you are awarded a loan. If you do not do the renovation impact survey prior to the architectural design work, then you may end up bearing all the costs of the asbestos inspection and abatement. (You can contact DOE for details on costs eligible for reimbursement from the Revolving Renovation Fund.)

If you do not do this survey, unidentified ACM may be disturbed during renovation, resulting in an uncontrolled release of asbestos fibers. If this happens, you may be faced with closing your school, hiring a consultant to determine the extent of contamination and to design a response action plan, and then paying major abatement and clean up costs. You are also liable as the owner of the building for non-compliance with state and federal regulations.

What if renovation or maintenance activities unexpectedly impact a material that might contain asbestos?

First, clear all people from the area and restrict access. Have an Asbestos Consultant evaluate the site for potential asbestos problems and plan any corrective action (i.e., create a response action plan). The consultant will look for visible debris to determine the extent of potential contamination and to develop a clean-up plan.

Some consultants may recommend sampling of dust for asbestos fibers. Dust sampling is not required to plan your corrective action, but it can be useful as an adjunct to other information when making decisions on the extent of actual abatement needed if asbestos-containing materials are unexpectedly impacted. If you are thinking about sampling dust for asbestos, please call the DEP Asbestos Program at 287-2651 to discuss whether it is appropriate given your particular situation.